

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
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AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE/ECJ2-W/S/P
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE/AEAGB-C(CM)-PDN/AEAGB-PDN(CURIN)
HQ USAFE RAMSTEIN AB GE/INO
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON ENG/N-2
USMLM BERLIN GE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 0480

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, MPOL, CSCE, CZ
SUBJECT: CSCE CBMS--WARSAW PACT STYLE

1. SUMMARY: THIS MESSAGE REPRESENTS THE EMBASSY'S COLLECTIVE APPRAISAL OF HOW, FROM OUR VANTAGE POINT, THE WARSAW PACT COMMAND STRUCTURE IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA IS PREPARING FOR THE UPCOMING BELGRADE CONFERENCE CONCERNING THAT PORTION OF CSCE WHICH DEALS WITH CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES. OUR INFORMATION IS BASED PRIMARILY ON OPEN PRESS REPORTING BY CSSR MEDIA AND INTENSIVE US/NATO ATTACHE
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COVERAGE OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND SOVIET MILITARY FIELD TRAINING EXERCISES. OUR INTENTION IN PREPARING THIS ANALYSIS WAS MAINLY TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON A MATTER WHICH WE KNOW IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT AS THE BELGRADE 77 PREPARATORY TALKS DRAW NEARER.
END SUMMARY.

2. SINCE THE CSCE FINAL ACT WAS SIGNED IN AUGUST 1975,

CZECHOSLOVAK MASS MEDIA ORGANS HAVE CONSISTENTLY AND SEVERELY CRITICIZED THE US AND NATO COUNTRIES FOR VIOLATING THE "SPIRIT OF HELSINKI" WITH REGARD TO CSCE "CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES" (CBM). INCREASED DEFENSE SPENDING, SO-CALLED "ANTI-DETENTE HYSTERIA," AND "AGGRESSIVE" ANNUAL FIELD TRAINING EXERCISES/ MANEUVERS BY US AND NATO FORCES HAVE ALL BEEN SUBJECTS OF SPECIAL AND FREQUENT EXPLOITATION BY THE CZECHOSLOVAK COMMUNIST PRESS. SIMULTANEOUSLY, THE PARTY-CONTROLLED PRESS HAS EXTOLLED PEACEFUL EFFORTS OF THE WARSAW PACT LED BY THE SOVIET UNION, IS FAITHFULLY ABIDING BY THE HELSINKI SPIRIT AND PROMOTING GREATER SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN ALL OF EUROPE. THIS UNRELENTING PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN IS OBVIOUSLY ORCHESTRATED FROM MOSCOW IN PREPARATION FOR THE BELGRADE CSCE FOLLOW-UP CONFERENCE, PREPARATORY TALKS WHICH WILL BEGIN IN JUNE.

3. THE WARSAW PACT, WITH ITS OBJECTIVE TO PROJECT A LOW MILITARY PROFILE, HAS DECLARED ONLY ONE COMBINED MULTI-NATIONAL FIELD TRAINING EXERCISE UNDER CBM NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS. THIS WAS SHIELD 76, WHICH TOOK PLACE IN POLAND IN SEPTEMBER 1976. PUBLICIZED AS AN EXERCISE OF A DEFENSIVE NATURE, CONTRASTING WITH NATO EXERCISES WHICH THE COMMUNIST PRESS HAS ASSAILED AS OFFENSIVE, IT INVOLVED FORCES OF THE SOVIET UNION, POLAND, CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND EAST GERMANY UNDER THE OVERALL COMMAND OF A POLISH GENERAL. UNITY WAS THE PRINCIPAL THEME. THE USSR HAS, OF COURSE, CONDUCTED NATIONAL EXERCISES OF ITS OWN INVOLVING ABOVE 25,000 TROOPS AND MADE SOME EFFORT TO COMPLY WITH CSCE CBM PROVISIONS.

4. PURPORTING THEREFORE TO HAVE FULFILLED CSCE CBM REQUIREMENTS
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AND TO HAVE ESTABLISHED AN OVERT, LOW MILITARY PROFILE, THE WARSAW PACT MUST BE EXPECTED TO COMPARE ITS RECORD AGAINST THAT OF NATO IN BELGRADE AND ATTEMPT TO MAKE FURTHER PROPAGANDA GAINS AT THE EXPENSE OF NATO. THE REALITY OF THE SITUATION IS THAT THROUGHOUT 1976 AND IN EARLY 1977 WARSAW PACT FORCES HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN AN ACCELERATED REEQUIPMENT/UPDATE PROGRAM. INTRODUCTION OF THIRD-GENERATION AIRCRAFT, TANKS, ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS, SELF-PROPELLED GUNS AND SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE SYSTEMS WAS EVIDENT THROUGHOUT THE WARSAW PACT, PARTICULARLY IN EAST GERMANY.

5. IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, WINTER FIELD TRAINING EXERCISES HAVE, SINCE WINTER 1976, TAKEN ON A NEW CHARACTER. INSTEAD OF CONDUCTING LARGE EXERCISES WHICH WOULD EXCEED THE 25,000 TROOP LEVEL, CSLA AND CGF HAVE CONDUCTED A SERIES OF SMALLER EXERCISES/MANEUVERS (EXCEPT FOR SHIELD 76) IN A JOINT MANNER, BUT IN A PACKAGED ROTATIONAL PATTERN EXTENDED OVER A PROTRACTED PERIOD OF TIME. IN ANY SINGLE EXERCISE, THIS ALLOWS CSLA-CGF TO TRAIN SIDE-BY-SIDE AT TROOP LEVELS BELOW THE 25,000. WE SUSPECT THAT GDR AND GSFG

TROOP LEVELS INVOLVED IN EXERCISES/MANEUVERS IN EAST GERMANY DURING THE SAME TIME FRAME MAY SIMILARLY BE HELD BELOW THE 25,000 MARK. HOWEVER, COMBINED (I.E. CSLA-CGF AND GDR-GSFG), THE TROOP LEVELS MAY WELL EXCEED THE CBM PRIOR NOTIFICATION FIGURE OF 25,000.

6. COMMENT: CONSIDERING THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE EASTS PROPAGANDA IMAGE AND REALITY, AVAILABLE EVIDENCE HERE SUGGESTS TO US THAT: 1) WARSAW PACT FORCES ARE INVOLVED IN A DISCREET PROGRAM OF INCREASING MILITARY CAPABILITIES IN THE FORWARD AREA BY INTRODUCING THIRD GENERATION EQUIPMENTS INTO ACTIVE UNIT INVENTORIES, AND PROBABLY EXCEEDING EQUIPMENT AND TROOP STRENGTH LEVELS IN CERTAIN COMBAT UNITS. 2) WARSAW PACT FORCES IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC MAY BE ENGAGED IN A CAREFULLY COORDINATED TRAINING PROGRAM IN WHICH INDIVIDUAL EXERCISES/MANEUVERS TECHNICALLY DO NOT REQUIRE PRIOR NOTIFICATION TO CSCE
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PARTICIPANT STATES, UNDER TERMS OF CSCE CBM'S ALTHOUGH THE SCOPE OF OVERALL FORWARD AREA TRAINING MAY WELL APPROXIMATE OR EXCEED THE PARAMETERS FOR NOTIFICATION. 3) INCREASINGLY CLOSE COORDINATION BETWEEN CSLA AND CGF SUGGESTS THAT MOSCOW CONSIDERS CSLA TO HAVE BEEN DECISIVELY REHABILITATED POLITICALLY SINCE THE EVENTS OF 1968 SO THAT CSLA IS NOW SEEN AS POLITICALLY RELIABLE IN THE EVENT OF HOSTILITIES AGAINST THE WARSAW PACT. IN ADDITION TO THEIR IMPACT ON CSCE ISSUES, THE ABOVE DEVELOPMENTS OBVIOUSLY ALSO SHOULD BE STUDIED WITH AN EYE ON MBFR CONSIDERATIONS.
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